

Media Release



8 May 2007

Carers Australia is the peak body working to improve the lives of carers through advocacy and services. It works with a network of carer associations in each state and territory to promote recognition of the important role that carers and their families have in the community and to assist carers to be better informed and resourced.

Carers extremely disappointed with budget

Carers Australia is surprised and disappointed at the apparent disregard of recommendations it made for the 2007-08 Federal Budget.

While the Government has proudly trumpeted modest increases to respite funding, it has largely ignored our recommended measures designed to improve the lives of Australia's 2.6 million family carers.

"It is particularly disappointing given the huge surplus that more could not be done for some of Australia's most deserving citizens" Carers Australia President, Ben Chodziesner said. "There are a lot of big numbers being thrown around but none of them come close to the \$30.5 billion family carers save the economy each year."

"Carers Australia believes the Government needs to take a far more holistic approach to addressing the needs of carers."

"While increases in respite funding and the carer bonuses are always welcome, carers deserve more."

Carers Australia called for improved financial security for carers, carer health initiatives, strategies to assist carers remain in the workforce and a national carer framework. These were just a few of the recommendations that were overlooked in tonight's budget.

"We were expecting a budget that would be family friendly" Mr Chodziesner said. "We thought we would hear announcements that would look to the future. There is nothing for family carers in this regard."

"How will the announced changes to superannuation benefit the carers who currently don't even have access to a super scheme? What will they retire on? Where is the rebate for employed family carers who need to pay for care for children with disabilities and/or ageing parents? We made recommendations in both of these areas but were ignored."

Carers Australia believes that all carers are entitled to the same rights, choices and opportunities as other Australians in order to enjoy optimum health, social and economic wellbeing and to participate in family, social and community life, employment and education.

Carers Australia is the peak body for 2.6 million people providing care for family members or friends with a disability, mental illness, chronic condition or who are aged and frail. Carers Australia provides services and support to Australia's carers through the network of Carer Associations in each state and territory.

Contacts: Ben Chodziesner, President, 03 9787 6716 or 0407 960 688

Anthony Watkins, 02 6122 9911

Page 1 of 1